

John Marks Talks About The CIA

John D. Marks worked as an intelligence analyst for the State Department before writing, with Victor Marchetti, "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence" — publication of which the CIA attempted to stop in court. Marks, now director of the CIA research project being conducted by the Center for National Security Studies, is attempting to get Congress to investigate intelligence agencies. He was interviewed by Washington Star Staff Writer Allan Frank.

Question: In what areas of ordinary life has the CIA been involved that you think will surprise or shock the American people if evidence comes out during the hearings about such activities?

Marks: The CIA has been heavily involved in church activities, religious activities. They've infiltrated the church and used the church or church groups as funding mechanisms. They solicit information from missionaries, try to hire missionaries. Things of that sort will shock a lot of people. They also had a contributory pension plan and the investment programs were regularly fun through the CIA's bank of computers at Langley, which are some of the most advanced computers in the world. This is a profit-making plan for private employes and government computers are not supposed to be used for that sort of thing. I think that will shock people. We also know that the CIA has made use of private investigating firms in this country to do some of its domestic operations. Again, I think this may shock the American people.

Q: Have you read any stories lately about the CIA that surprised you?

A: It's hard to be surprised by anything now, but I guess I have to say I was surprised when I found out that the CIA had gone to the Mafia to take an assassination contract out on Fidel Castro. I always thought that our government didn't deal with the Mafia. Maybe that's naive, but that surprised me.

Q: Do you believe the stories that the CIA went to the Mafia? Or the stories about Howard Hughes' connection with the Soviet submarine and the CIA?

A: Yes, I believe them. I've confirmed them through my own sources. I knew that U.S. intelligence

was doing an awful lot of overseas research and other kinds of activities, but I didn't know that they had gone in specifically after a Soviet submarine. I do know in a general way that the CIA has been very actively working with all kinds of American businesses and that they have working agreements with quite a few American companies, so this kind of thing with Hughes didn't surprise me. For example, one former CIA guy with 20 years in the agency told me about how, in one Latin American country the CIA had a deal with Pan American Airlines where the CIA was given access to all the baggage and mail that went through on Pan American planes. To facilitate the CIA's access, Pan Am even supplied the CIA's men with Pan Am overalls, which would give them a better excuse to be rummaging around in the baggage compartments of Pan Am's planes. This kind of arrangement has existed all over the world with American business.

Q: Do you feel that U.S. intelligence efforts in that kind of operation will be hampered, particularly with regard to Pan Am, now that the Iranians are about to buy a major portion of Pan Am?

A: No, in this case because the Iranian government has very closely cooperated with, and was put in by, the CIA. Iranian intelligence cooperates very closely with the CIA. I think some of the exposures that have come out recently of American business contacts and cooperation may have some effect because I think foreign countries now are going to be putting much more pressure on American businesses operating in their countries not to be espionage operations. And (CIA director) William Colby himself told the press last year that over 200 businessmen, or so-called businessmen overseas, were really CIA operatives. Now, the press didn't report that it was William Colby — it was a "high U.S. official," but I can tell you it was Colby.

Q: But what will the exposures really mean?

A: Exposures are going to limit this kind of close cooperation between American businesses and the CIA because the primary business of American business should not be espionage. The companies are going to see that they are not going to be able to get away with this kind of close cooperation without anybody knowing it and they are going to have to be responsible for their acts. If they want to own up to the fact that they're cooperating with the CIA, that's fine. But I have a feeling —

and some of the CIA supporters agree — that American business is going to back off some of its close cooperation with the CIA because it doesn't want to get nationalized or have its public interest tarnished. I know for a fact that ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph), Pan Am and W.R. Grace Shipping Co. have all provided cover for the CIA overseas in the past. I don't think that's consistent with their proper roles.

Q: How do you know that for a fact?

A: I've talked to CIA people who have told me. I've said it publicly in speeches and no one has challenged me.

Q: Will it hurt American businesses not to be connected with the CIA?

A: It may in some areas. American business cooperation with the CIA has been a two-way street. These businesses have done favors for the CIA and the CIA in return, either formally or informally, has passed information — economic intelligence — to the American businesses which has been very helpful to them. One longtime CIA operative in South America told me that while he had no official directive to help out American businessmen overseas, he would pass on information that was helpful. Information, for instance, on which companies were about to be nationalized, which companies were in trouble with the local government. I believe this goes on on a broader scale.

Q: Do you then agree with Mr. Colby's analysis that if the CIA is limited overseas, it will hurt the United States' economic position in the world?

A: No. I think it would be a much healthier situation if American business concentrated on being a good corporate citizen overseas and didn't make itself an extension of American intelligence operations. And I should emphasize that it's not all American business that is doing this.

Q: What to you is the most important lead the congressional investigating committees could pursue? For instance, do you have any proof that the CIA ever assassinated anybody?

A: Do I have any proof? I don't have any proof I could go into a court of law with. I know from my own sources and from things that have

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P-MARKS, JOHN
ORGI Churches
CIA 4.01 Domestic
spying
CIA 2.03
ORGI MAFIA
CIA 4.01 PAN
AMERICAN
AIRLINES
CIA 1.01 Colby
William
CIA 3.01.3
Business
CIA 4.01
W.R. GRACE
Shipping Co.
CIA 3.01.3
(General)
CIA 4.01 ASSETS
NATIONS
ORGI United
NATIONS
CIA 2.04.1
P-FRANK,
Allen
Cong under
Marks